

Bottled water requires indoor storage to stay clear and drinkable

Summer is coming, so you will need to plan ahead and order extra bottled water. Before you do, here are a few facts about storing bottled water and the empty containers.

- Water should not be stored in direct sunlight. Direct sunlight may trigger algae growth within three days.
- Do not store bottled water outside. Bottles stored outside are exposed to dirt, dust, germs and rainwater.
- Sunlight deteriorates the plastic bottles. Exposure to sunlight will cause a plastic bottle to become prematurely brittle and break earlier than if it is stored inside.
- Do not store empty bottles without lids. Spiders build webs inside the empty bottles. Spider webs (and trapped bugs) are almost impossible to see or remove from inside a water bottle during the cleaning and sanitizing operations prior to refilling.



Fluor Hanford storekeeper Mike Hogan helps deliver bottled water to Hanford Site customers.

Although there is no established expiration for properly bottled water, the vendor's suggestion is about 30 days. This suggested storage time could certainly be extended if bottled water is stored in a cool, dark room, away from direct sunlight.

Many facilities are storing bottled water outside or have inventories that are several months old. Users of bottled water should evaluate their storage practices to ensure the water remains clear and drinkable. If you order bottled water for use at your facility, here are some recommendations:

- If there is no date on the bottle, be sure to mark the delivery date on the bottle cap. Water is usually delivered the day after it has been bottled, so this is a very accurate method to use for tracking purposes.
- If your water is delivered to an outside dock, be sure to check the dock daily if you are expecting an order and move the bottled water inside as soon as possible.
- Be careful to avoid handling the lids when bottles are moved around. If a lid should accidentally come off of a full bottle during delivery or storage, dispose of the water to avoid the possibility of drinking contaminated water.

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- “First in, first out” is the best rule for bottled water. Use the older bottles first.
- Adjust your order so that you have no more than a 30-day supply on hand.

If the vendor has filled your order for bottled water and the driver is delivering the water to your location, that order cannot be rejected or returned. This agreement is written into the contract with the supplier and is non-negotiable. There are no returns on bottled water because it is considered a consumable product.

If you are a Fluor Hanford employee and have any questions regarding safety and health issues, contact Fluor Hanford Environment, Safety, Health and Quality at 373-1289. If you have questions about the water contract, contact Rita Magnaghi at 376-0323, Chris Hopkins at 372-0286 or David of Paradise Bottled Water Company at 783-0253. ■